

Media Release



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Top Australian Scientist Returns Home to Scout for Merck Sharpe & Dohme

Sydney-born scientist Dr Phil Kearney has been enticed back from a top Scandinavian biotechnology management role to become key scout for innovative research and development in the Asia Pacific region for Merck Sharp & Dohme Australia.

Replacing pioneering External Licensing Coordinator, Professor Graham Macdonald, who successfully brokered a \$100 million-plus agreement between Merck Sharp & Dohme and AMRAD (now Zenyth Therapeutics) to develop a new asthma treatment, Dr Kearney brings a fresh approach and new skills to the challenge of uncovering and commercialising discoveries by local researchers that have strong potential to benefit the health of people around the world.

His background in oncology and haematology signals a new era for the company as Merck & Co looks to identify and secure novel drug targets for cancer treatment, in addition to a range of other diseases.

Dr Kearney said he sees his role as an ambassador for regional science convincing international decision-makers within Merck of the worth of investing in Asia-Pacific health and medical research, especially Australian discoveries.

“The size, scope and competitiveness of global business presents a real challenge for Australian researchers, but the upsides for those with truly innovative outcomes are huge,” said Dr Kearney.

“Australia has a world-class health and medical research industry and has the potential to become a serious player on the international scene. I am keen to help the local industry build a better understanding of the development process and what makes a great drug in order to optimise opportunities,” he said.

Holding an MBA from the University of Sydney and a PhD from Monash University, Dr Kearney worked at St Vincent’s Hospital for a decade as Head of the Haematology Research Laboratory. He moved to Sweden in 2000 to take up the role of Project Leader Oncology for ActiveBiotech, before joining Danish biotechnology company Santaris Pharma as Director of External Research.

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In his new role at Merck Sharp & Dohme, Dr Kearney will be responsible for identifying partnership opportunities with research institutes and biotechnology companies to secure high-value intellectual property for the Merck & Co development pipeline.

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Media Contact: Rachel Reyna,
Corporate Affairs Manager
ph: 02 9795 9153 or mob: 0414 795 185